

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Nebraska Cyclospora Outbreak Reaches More Than 50 Cases

### Investigation progressing - Contaminated food source likely gone

**Lincoln** – The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and local health departments continue to investigate a gastrointestinal illness outbreak caused by a rare parasite called Cyclospora.

There are currently 53 cases statewide concentrated mostly in the eastern part of the state. Three people have been hospitalized and were released. DHHS continues to receive reports of new cases daily.

Fresh vegetables and fruit are usually associated with Cyclospora outbreaks. People become sick when they consume food contaminated with the parasite. DHHS and local health department officials conducted interviews with Nebraskans who contracted the illness. Based on those interviews, vegetables appear to be the cause of the outbreak. Locally grown produce is not part of this outbreak.

Interviews also show people's symptoms started no later than the end of June which suggests the contaminated food source may have worked its way through the system since fresh produce has a limited shelf life.

"We're hoping to find the outbreak is limited in duration and scope and this is an encouraging sign," said Dr. Joseph Acierno, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for DHHS. "We are still working to locate the exact source of the outbreak and will remain vigilant in investigating newly reported cases."

Symptoms of Cyclospora include diarrhea that can last weeks to months, fatigue, loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, intestinal gas, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches and low-grade fever.

People experiencing symptoms should see a physician for diagnosis and treatment.

DHHS will continue to work closely with local health departments, other states and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as the investigation moves forward. The goal is to protect Nebraskans, pinpoint the source of the outbreak, make sure the risk is eliminated and find out why the contamination occurred.

For the latest Cyclospora outbreak information, go to [www.dhhs.ne.gov/cyclospora](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/cyclospora).

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\*A breakdown of cases by local health department district is below.

\*\* Cyclospora cases from previous years are also below.

36 - Douglas County Health Dept.

5 - Sarpy/Cass Dept. of Health and Wellness

3 - Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Dept.

4 - Three Rivers Public Health Dept. (Dodge, Saunders, Washington counties)

1 - North Central District Health Dept. (Antelope, Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Pierce and Rock counties)

1 - Southwest Nebraska Public Health Dept. (Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow counties)

1 - East Central District Health Dept. (Boone, Colfax, Nance, Platte counties)

1 - Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Dept. (Burt, Cuming, Madison, Stanton counties)

1 - Two Rivers Public Health Dept. (Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps counties)

Nebraska Cyclospora cases from previous years

2012 - 0

2011 - 0

2010 - 0

2009 - 0

2008 - 1

2007 - 1